



On January 12, 2019, in the Divine Master Community of Fresno (U.S.A.), at 7:30 PM local time, the Lord called to eternal life our sister

SR. M. ALBA – LORENZINA SCELLATO
BORN IN NICOSIA (ENNA) ON JUNE 3, 1924.

Lorenzina entered the Congregation on February 19, 1938. She was the first flower plucked from the same garden to give glory to his Eucharistic presence. Lorenzina, in fact, was the first of three sisters who entered among the Sister Disciples. The second is Sr. M. Aurora, who was born in 1927, entered the Congregation in 1939, and died in 2014. The third is Sr. M. Felicia, the eldest: born in 1921, she entered in 1949, and died in 1967.

Sr. M. Alba, who was always proud of the fact that she was born in the same year in which the Congregation was founded, recounted some significant moments in her vocational story. Her family often gave hospitality to the Sister Disciples (Paulines) when they went to Nicosia to diffuse the Gospel. Accompanying her mother to a medical visit in Catania, they arrived at our community. Upon seeing the young woman, the sister responsible for the community Mother M. Pia Dogliani, discretely but clearly offered the invitation: «“If the girl would like to remain with us for these days, she is welcome to do so”». *It was convenient for us and I remained there. I immediately felt comfortable with the sisters and I observed everything: the food, work, prayer, rest, recreation, and I was especially attracted by their singing. The atmosphere was filled with life, jovial fraternity, and joyful songs*». Lorenzina then expressed her desire to remain with the Sisters. She feared, in fact, that if she returned to her family she would not have the inner strength to leave home. The mother, after speaking with the superior, accepted her daughter's decision. At the end of the brief notes, Sr. M. Alba affirmed: «*Prayer was always the strongest nourishment that accompanied me through every event in Italy and in the United States*». Following the period of initial formation, she made her first religious profession in Alba (CN) on March 25, 1943, and her perpetual profession on March 25, 1948, also in Alba. During the first year of temporary vows, she was dedicated to the diffusion of the Gospel in Ivrea and then in Aosta. In 1944, she was in Alba, dedicated to study and to priestly service.

After her perpetual profession, already in November of 1948, she was asked to leave for a mission in the United States: «*On the morning of November 5, in a dawn filled with light and blooming with hope, their life dedicated to the Divine Master, the following Sisters left Genoa on the ship "Maria Costa" headed for New York: Sr. Maria Alba Scellato, Sr. Maria Eugenia Baggio, Sr. Maria Fiorella Portale. These sisters, like the others who preceded them, were truly edifying; the Congregation is pleased to be their Mother and many awaited their constant generosity*» (Divin Maestro, December 1948). Sr. M. Alba was initially dedicated in New York to finding benefactors who would provide for the needs of the Pauline Family and of the Congregation through their generosity. In 1949, she was at the Society of Saint Paul in Canfield. She then returned to New York in 1951 with the same mission. In 1957 she was sent to the Diocesan Seminary in Fresno. In 1965 she was in the community in Brookline, near Boston, where she dedicated herself to sewing and the Liturgical Apostolate Center. In 1970 she went to the house in Boston, which had been recently acquired, where she remained for many years dedicated to sewing vestments and embroidery. In 2001 she went to the community in Fresno, where, besides the apostolic activities, the elderly and infirm sisters are received as they live out the apostolate of suffering and of prayer.

The sisters of the United States wrote this about her: *«On the evening of January 12, the Divine Master came among us to take the mature and succulent fruit prepared for the eternal Banquet. Originally, Sr. M. Alba was chosen to be a missionary in China. Her arrival in New York was planned as part of the immediate preparation... A revolt broke out and our Paulines were expelled from the country after being imprisoned. Sr. M. Alba was then destined for the United States. She embraced this nation with her entire being. She assumed the characteristics of this culture, with the missionary flexibility arising from a great heart. Here she found the space to develop and to exercise her artistic talents.*

Sr. M. Alba distinguished herself in embroidery, in singing, in study; she read a great deal and mastered English well. She always kept her mind active and involved, reading the newspaper daily for as long as she was able to do so, she made the best use of her time. Open and jovial by nature, she formed relationships with many people who became benefactors for the Congregation. For this purpose, she maintained regular correspondence, and also used the computer. For many years in Fresno, Sr. M. Alba coordinated the adorers, whom she would seek out and foster. The Eucharist was her SUN. She was in love with the Divine Master, with her vocation, and the mission of the Sister Disciples. She never lost, nor allowed to wither, that liveliness that would bring her to dance her Sicilian Tarantella with gusto» (Sr. M. Tiziana Dal Masetto).

Sr. M. Alba carried in her heart strong vocational incentives, which became the guiding values of her life, of her prayer, and the dedication of her energies. She exercised great charity toward her sisters and toward anyone in need. From her later writings to Sr. M. Regina Cesarato, the Superior General at the time, we report some affirmations that reflect her interior spirit, in which she views the events of life as a source of joy and gratitude to God and to other persons. *«My desire is that my energies may be spent for the community and for the sisters who are in need... I pray and offer for the new community that will be established in Jerusalem ... I ask the Lord for health and wisdom and courage that, in the Congregation, we can bring to fruition what the Founder held in his heart » (Fresno, January 13, 2009). «As I send you my vocational story, I also take the opportunity to express my gratitude for the countless initiatives for the vitality of the Congregation, of the Regions, and the individuals (sisters)» (February 27, 2012). «I am pleased to give everything and to continue my praise for those who remember me and those whom I remember affectionately. I give thanks to the Divine Master for the Holy Father and pray for vocations today, tomorrow and always, that the Eucharist may be the light and source of renewal for everyone» (January 8, 2016). The following text may be considered her testament: «In joy and good health I am pleased to offer all of my faculties for the good of the Church, and the growth of the Congregation in spirit and in the persons. I pray for your intentions that the 9th General Chapter may bring new vitality to us and to the Church. I pray for you always and thank you» (January 23, 2017).*

The sisters in Fresno bear witness that her passage into eternal life, in the presence of the entire community, took place in a truly Paschal atmosphere. She was fully alert and awaited her Spouse, saying: *I am ready, Jesus will come when he wants.* Although she was suffering from many ailments associated with her age, her condition worsened within a week and she concluded her earthly pilgrimage following a cardio-respiratory problem.

It was a death associated with the last Mass of Blessed Giaccardo and a remembrance of our pontifical approval. Sr. M. Alba remains for us an eloquent witness of the disciple who is simple, enamored of the Eucharist, and of her vocation as a Sister Disciple! To her we entrust the Vocational Year of the Pauline Family that is about to begin!

S. H. Paolo Mancini